

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910456384303321
Titolo	Letters from heaven : popular religion in Russia and Ukraine // edited by John-Paul Himka and Andriy Zayarnyuk
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Toronto, [Ontario] ; ; Buffalo, [New York] ; ; London, [England] : , : University of Toronto Press, , 2006 ©2006
ISBN	1-281-99208-9 9786611992088 1-4426-7664-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (290 p.)
Disciplina	281.947
Soggetti	Religion and culture - Ukraine Religion and culture - Russia Electronic books. Russia Religion Ukraine Religion Russia History Ukraine History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction / Zayarnyuk, Andriy / Himka, John-Paul -- Death Ritual among Russian and Ukrainian Peasants: Linkages between the Living and the Dead / Worobec, Christine D. -- Folk Orthodoxy: Popular Religion in Contemporary Ukraine / Kononenko, Natalie -- The Miracle as Sign and Proof: 'Miraculous Semiotics' in the Medieval and Early Modern Ukrainian Mentality / Holyk, Roman -- Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Russian Orthodoxy: Sin and Virtue in Cultural Context / Kivelson, Valerie A. -- The Christian Sources of the Cult of St Paraskeva / Levin, Eve -- Popular Religion in the Time of Peter the Great / Bushkovitch, Paul -- Letters from Heaven: An Encounter between the 'National Movement' and 'Popular Culture' / Zayarnyuk, Andriy -- For the Beauty of God's House: Notes on Icon Vestments and Decorations in

the Ruthenian Church / Senyk, Sophia -- 'Social' Elements in Ukrainian Icons of the Last Judgment through the Eighteenth Century / Himka, John-Paul -- Between 'Popular' and 'Official': Akafisty Hymns and Marian Icons in Late Imperial Russia / Shevzov, Vera -- Contributors

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## Sommario/riassunto

Letters from Heaven features an international group of scholars investigating the place and function of 'popular' religion in Eastern Slavic cultures. The contributors examine popular religious practices in Russia and Ukraine from the middle ages to the present, considering the cultural contexts of death rituals, miracles, sin and virtue, cults of the saints, and icons. The collection not only fills a void in religious scholarship, but also responds to current theoretical challenges. Reflecting critically on the heuristic value of popular religion and on the concept of popular culture in general, Letters from Heaven is characterized by a shift of focus from churches, institutions, and theological discourse to the religious practices themselves and their interconnections with the culture, mentality, and social structures of the societies in question. An important contribution to the fields of religion and Eastern Slavic studies, this volume challenges readers to rethink old pieties and to reconsider the function of religion.

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